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The gospel in Flanders

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THE

Gospel in Flanders

The Evangelical Mission Work "SHILOH"

Among the

Flemish Roman Catholic Population

in

BRUSSELS AND BELGIUM

Director: Pastor J. CHRISPEELS
Devrière Straat, 11, Laeken-Brussels.

The Gospel of Christ is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth.
ROM. I: 16.

LAEKEN-BRUSSELS
Devrière Straat, 11.

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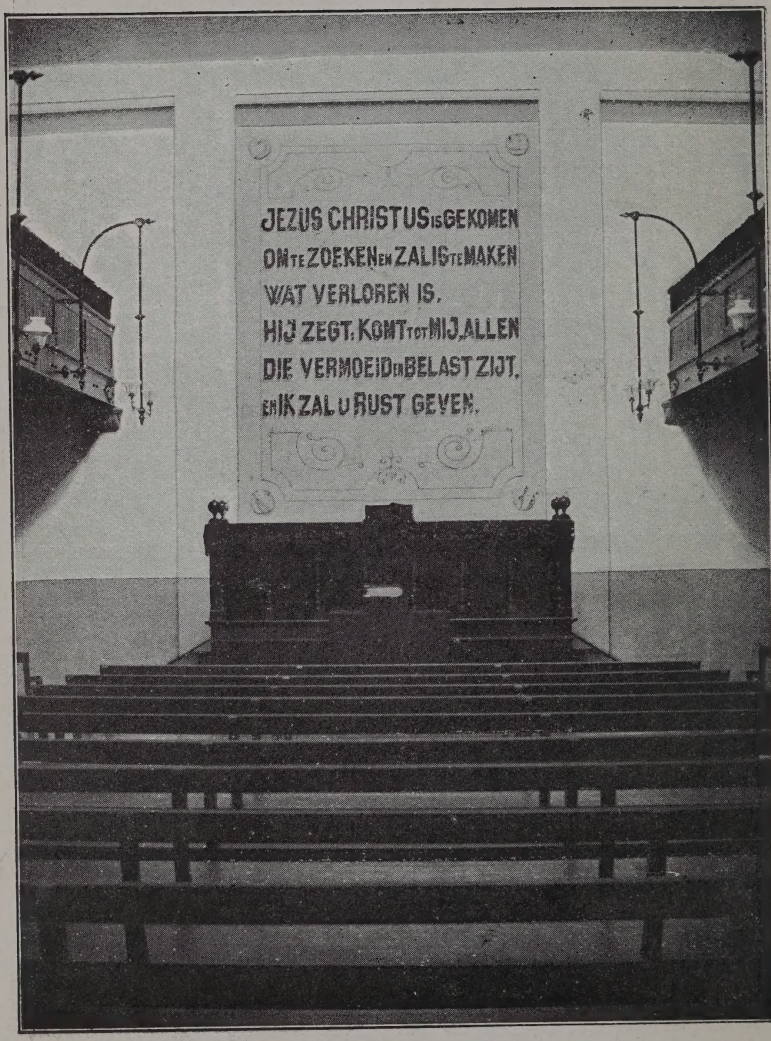
The Committee, the Director and his Co-Workers, Evangelists, Teachers and Colporteurs, in 1913,
at the Inauguration of the Gospel-House in Ronse.


JEZUS CHRISTUS IS GEKOMEN
OM TE ZOEKEN EN ZALIG TE MAKEN
WAT VERLOREN IS.
HIJ ZEGT: KOMT TOT MIJ ALLEN
DIE VERMOEID EN BELAST ZIJT,
EN IK ZAL U RUST GEVEN.

Shiloh-Chapel. Laeken, Brussels.

Silo-vereeniging

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THE POPULATION OF BELGIUM.

Belgium has 4 million Flemish and 3 million Walloon Inhabitants.

The Flemish language is the same as the Dutch of Holland.

The literary language of the Walloons is French.

THE COMMITTEE :

Pastor W. Hoek, in Brussels.

Mr. G. S. Eekman, Manufacturer in Brussels.

Pastor E. B. Couvée, in Utrecht.

Mr. L. G. James, Notary in Maarssen (Holland).

Mr. H. de Liefde, Manufacturer in Culemborg.

Gifts will be thankfully received by the Director,

Pastor J. Chrispeels,
Devrièrestraat, 11, Laeken-Brussels,
Belgium.

The Committee, the Director, his Co-workers, and some friends of the Mission, in 1922.

5, Rue du Champ-de-Mars,
Brussels, Belgium.

The Evangelistic work outlined in this pamphlet, carried on under the direction of Pastor Chrispeels, is entirely worthy of the sympathy and help of those who are interested in the proclamation of the gospel for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

From very modest beginnings, this effort, under the blessing of God, has grown and developed, thanks to the indefatigable efforts and unceasing labors of Pastor Chrispeels and his helpers, into an Evangelistic work which is a power in Belgium.

The evolution has been steady and persistent. Where at one time stood a tent, now stands a commodious building, comprising church, school, printing press, etc., and from this House of God, in the center of a stronghold of Catholicism, streams forth light to many who still sit in darkness, comfort to those who are distressed, and hope to the despairing.

In various parts of Belgium we find branches of the Mission where devoted men and women, many of them reclaimed from lives of sin and the errors of Catholicism, proclaim, by their lives and activities, the power of the gospel of Jesus-Christ.

I heartily and unreservedly commend the work of the Mission to the prayerful and generous help of those who seek to bring the knowledge of the love of God, as revealed in the face of Jesus-Christ, to those who are estranged from the heart of the Eternal.

Dr. D. A. SLOAN,
Director Methodist Mission in Europe,
Brussels, Belgium,
5, rue du Champ-de-Mars.

FLANDERS.

Do you know Flanders?

It is the Northern District of Belgium and has a population of 4 million inhabitants. Their language is the Flemish, the same as the Dutch of Holland.

Flanders occupied a principal place in the Middle-ages in Western European civilisation, and was for years the centre of art, science and industry.

The *Church-Reformation* of the 16th. Century found a fruitful soil here and the time was when Flanders was Protestant. But Rome persecuted the reformed with fire and sword.

Many thousands sealed their Evangelical faith with their blood, or fled to Holland, England and Germany, leaving their earthly possessions, rather than deny their faith.

These Refugees brought to those lands their treasures of faith, science, art and industry, but Flanders itself lost in them its best people.

Flanders was an earthly paradise before the persecution, but became a desert through it.

During the following centuries it became the bone of contention between its great neighbours, and the battle-field of Europe, as it has again been in our day.

In consequence of the loss of its best and noblest powers through the persecutions of the 16th. Century and succeeding epoch of neglect, the spiritual, moral and intellectual condition of Flanders was in a very sad state.

Ignorance, superstition and unbelief were widespread throughout the country.

And what the Roman Catholic Church and its Clergy are nowadays in Flanders, you will see from the following facts which we will give you in this little book.

The fundamental error of the Roman Catholic Church is, that it does not recognise the only true Christ of the Scriptures, and so cannot preach Him, as the one and only, perfect

and all-sufficient Redeemer, beside whom nobody can be placed.

Not knowing Him, who said : «Without Me, ye can do nothing'» it has neither the power to convert or to sanctify human hearts and lives, nor to raise the moral tone of the nation.

Concerning *Protestantism,* let it be said, that out of all the Protestant congregations in Flanders at the period of the Reformation only one was spared,— and though in the last century new congregations have been formed in Belgium and have led to the creation of either the National Protestant Church or the Christian Missionary Belgian Church, *the religious need of Flanders is a crying one.*

Although as a matter of fact, Flanders has *1248* towns and villages, in only *24* of them is the Gospel preached.

More than *1000* towns and villages are without any evangelical Work, and certainly not one million out of Belgium's seven million people could even tell you what the Bible is.

To meet this crying need is the aim and object of the Evangelical Mission «SHILOH» with its Evangelical efforts in towns and villages.

This Mission has at present:

8 Stations, with 9 Evangelists, all converted Roman Catholics.

3 Primary Christian schools, with 8 teachers.

A training school for Evangelists.

An extensive colportage-work (about 50,000 Bibles, Testaments and Christian publications are sold yearly).

A Publishing-house issuing: Holy Scriptures, Evangelical Books, Tracts, two Christian weekly papers, etc.

The Stations are :

1. Laeken-Brussels, with school.
2. Anderlecht-Brussels.
3. Schaerbeek-Brussels.
4. Vilvoorden-near Brussels.
5. Ronse (Renaix) in East Flanders, with school.
6. Geeraardsbergen (Grammont) in East Flanders, with school.
7. Meenen (Menin) in West Flanders, destroyed by the war.
8. Dunkerque (France).
9. Throughout the whole country *Evangelisation,* by means of *Open-air meetings,* especially at markets, preaching, singing of the Gospel, sale of books.

Bethel-Chapel, Brussels, Schaerbeek.

The Primary Christian School "Shiloh," in Brussels.

EXPENSES.

Yearly ordinary expenses	Frs.	100,000
Yearly profits of the Printing Office		25,000
	Frs.	75,000

The sum of *75,000* frs. must be got by collections and gifts, mostly from other countries.

Besides the 100,000 francs for our ordinary yearly expenses, we want now 200,000 francs for a new Gospel House in Menin and one in Dunkirk.

The *aim* of this Evangelical Mission is to bring the Gospel to the people, so that they may know and accept Jesus-Christ, as their only, their perfect, their all-sufficient *Saviour.*

The object of this Work is to glorify God.

He has greatly blessed it, so that many thousands have already, through it, learned that only *Name,* which under Heaven is given among men, whereby we must be saved. Through its agency, many a man and woman has been rescued from a life of sin and misery, many a child has been kept from the way of wickedness and been brought into the path of goodness, many a family has been raised spiritually, morally and socially from a fallen and degraded condition.

The Gospel of Jesus-Christ has here also proved itself to be *the power of God* unto salvation and the means of real development and culture, as may be seen from the facts given below.

The Committee *urgently appeals* to Christians abroad *to help* this necessary and divinely blessed work.

Gifts will be thankfully received by:
Director, Pastor J. Chrispeels,
11, Devrièrestraat,
Laeken-Brussels (Belgium).

The Committee is composed of :—

Pastor W. Hoek, in Brussels.
Mr. G. S. Eekman, manufacturer in Brussels.
Pastor E. B. Couvée, in Utrecht (Holland).
Mr. H. de Liefde, manufacturer in Culemborg (Holland).
Mr. L. G. James, notary in Maarssen (Holland).

HOW THIS WORK BEGAN.

We have already spoken of the newly-founded congregations in Belgium. One of these was the Dutch-Flemish congregation of Brussels, founded in 1838 by an ex-Roman Catholic priest, who remained pastor of the Church until his death in 1873.— In 1874 this congregation, seeking God's blessing and guidance addressed a call to the Rev. N. de Jonge, a Dutchman, who accepted the invitation and came to Brussels. During his ministry, this man of God became acquainted with the Flemish population and was moved with compassion by its spiritual distress, on account of its ignorance of the Gospel. He trained some young Flemish men as evangelists and, helped by them, he began with much prayer a Work of Evangelization.

Owing to an unexpected event referred to further on, this work received a new impulsion by new means of work, which proved a remedy to the condition.

It was in the year 1880 that Belgium celebrated its Jubilee as an independent Kingdom. In the capital of Brussels, an exhibition was held, which attracted thousands of Belgians and foreigners. Some Christians in England took advantage of this opportunity, to place a Gospel tent near the exhibition, where the truth was preached every day in the two Belgian languages: the Flemish and the French. A great many people heard the Gospel in this tent and eternity alone will reveal the good that was accomplished. When the exhibition was closed, this evangelistic effort ceased, but the English friends presented the tent to Mr. de Jonge.

In 1883 Mr. de Jonge with us, as his assistants wished to begin once more a work of evangelization by means of the tent. We were divinely led to the suburb of Brussels called Laeken. Here it was placed in the midst of a Roman Catholic population, which was spiritually neglected.

After much prayer, the opening took place on Ascension Day, the third of May, 1883.

The whole summer of that year every day meetings were held, and again and again the tent was filled with people, for

whom the Gospel was a new thing. When winter came a wood building was erected, which took the place of the tent.

During seven years, Mr. de Jonge and his friends preached there every evening, till the wood building was replaced by a stone chapel.

In the place were once stood the linen tent, you find now :—

1. The chapel with 400 seats, a well-organized congregation meets in this building, a congregation which the Lord has founded by the preaching of His word in the tent. This congregation has a Young Men's Association, Women and Girls Assoc., Bible Classes, a Choir, etc.

2. An Elementary School, with about 100 children.

3. The living quarters of the Evangelist and the caretaker.

4. The printing press, where year after year thousands of bibles, books and papers are printed.

Two weekly Christian papers are published, which are distributed in Flanders, Holland, the East Indies and North America.

So we can say: «The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.»— (Ps. 126:6.) As shown from what is mentioned above, this Work has been greatly developed. Chapels have been erected in other suburbs of Brussels and in towns of Flanders, also in Dunkirk (France), and the committee has in its service 20 persons: ministers, evangelists, teachers and colporters.

Our earnest wish is not only to continue this Work, but also to extend it.

For that purpose the Committee asks for your help. Here is at stake the eternal salvation of the 4 million souls, living in Flanders.

Here is at stake the honour of the Gospel in a country, where it flourished so gloriously in former centuries.

Here is at stake the honour of God and of His Kingdom.

And therefore, brethren and sisters in England and America, help us.

Your gifts can be sent to the Director,

Rev. J. Chrispeels,

11, Devrièrestraat,

Laeken-Brussels (Belgium).

WHAT ONE BIBLE DID.

«My word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.»— Is. 55: 11.

The events recorded occurred in a village near Brussels, in the Flemish part of Belgium, where there are but few preachers of the Gospel, and where very few people possess a Bible, and still less know its contents.

Yet a simple Roman Catholic farmer in that village once bought a Bible from a Christian who went about in his leisure hours selling that book.

The farmer read his Bible often. He read it often, especially in the evening, to his wife, and both of them found it very beautiful, especially the history of the Suffering of our Lord Jesus-Christ.

On a certain occasion, unpremeditated he attended a Protestant Evangelical meeting, this was after he had possessed and read the Bible eleven years, it was there that he heard the Gospel preached for the first time.

He continued to go there, and thus learned to know the Lord and believe in Him. Later on his wife also learnt to know and believe in Christ as her Saviour.

These two found in the Bible and in the preaching peace for their hearts, comfort in their trials, and strength in their life's struggle.

They were but simple farmers and had to work hard for their large family.

On a certain day the father fell sick, and not long afterwards died, although he was only 50 years of age. His death was triumphant and an entry into life.

But now the poor woman was left with eight children, who had been spared to her out of 12, the oldest was only 16 years of age, and the youngest only six months, so that the neighbours said: «Oh, that is surely not good of our dear Lord that He has given you that little child.»

And the mother sighed also sometimes, when she pressed

that little one to her breast: Oh, why did the Lord give me this little lamb?

She had a very difficult struggle to make a living, but she sought and found comfort and strength in prayer. She was able to bring up and educate all her children honourably. She had also taught them to pray and read the word of God.

And her youngest child has been in her old age her support and comfort, and especially her joy, for this child became a preacher of the Gospel.

He has preached God's Word in Brussels and neighbourhood, in many places in Belgium and in the North of France. He is now Director of a great and extensive Evangelical Work in Belgium.

Father and mother died in peace, and their youngest son became a preacher of the Gospel: That was what one copy of the Bible did.

We will quote a saying which the mother said to her children:

«Children, when your father died, all was dark in our situation; but I assure you: Whatsoever the Lord does, is well done. He sent us trial, but it was to spare us from worse things. All things work together for good to those that love God.»

* * *

Another son of that poor widow was 14 years of age at his father's death, and he was one of the eldest children. Much depended on him, and faithfully did he help his mother during many years.

Later on, when he was grown up, there came a period in his life when he did not live according to God's Word, but what had been taught him in his boyhood at the Christian school and at home, did not leave him any peace until he had found his Lord again and given his heart to Him.

As he had experienced dissatisfaction in living for the world and since living for the Lord had found happiness and joy, he endeavoured to bring this Gospel to as many as possible still living in wordliness, and to tell them of Jesus-Christ. Therefore, in his leisure hours he started selling Gospel-books in the surroundings. For as he was convinced of the change which the book had made in his parents' home, he would try to get it into as many homes as possible.

A remarkable fact is, that he frequently visited Laeken,

the place to which the Lord was to call him, for God had predestinated him for this work.

By his colportage work throughout streets and in homes he had learned to know the people, their shortcomings, their great misery, their spiritual needs and wants, so that when speaking in public at the meetings he was able to touch these people with whose needs and wants he had acquainted himself.

He could address them admonishingly, condemning and exhorting with scorn,but also with comfort and encouragement. Many, many hundreds of times did he preach the Gospel at Laeken and other suburbs of Brussels, in the provinces, in churches and halls, on the streets, and the squares, or at our Mission-meetings.

What a lot he has done to spread the Gospel by scriptures and publications. For many years he edited the Evangelical weekly paper «De Blyde Boodschap,» And when we had to suspend the publication for lack of funds, he continued issuing the paper bearing all the financial loss.

When «De Blyde Boodschap» was able to reappear, he advised the Revd. de Jonge, Director of the whole work, to publish a similar edition for Holland.

The Revd. de Jonge did not immediately make the venture, but being pressed by his friend F.C. he started, and the publication of the paper was an accomplished fact, so that now over there in Holland the paper is read in thousands of homes, and is at present united with the Belgian edition. It is not only read in Belgium and Holland, but also in East-India and North-America. But the work that received the most help from him was the Evangelical Mission Work at Laeken-Brussels.

It was begun in 1883, in a tent on Ascension Day, the 3rd of May.

This work commenced and continued in the spirit of prayer, has been richly blessed by the Lord.

On the spot where once stood the tent, and afterwards the wooden building, there now stands a chapel, for the congregation which the Lord has founded there by His Word and Spirit. There is also a Christian Primary School, with about 100 children and five teachers. Mr. F. C. was also convinced of the importance of the Christian school.

At the Christian school one is able to impress childhood by the Gospel, and the first seeds of God's Word are sown. In later life, the impressions received revive and the seed takes

root. Mr. F. C. in faith, created the school, while he was encouraged by Revd. Laan, who was at that time Director of the whole work.

During his life he ever proved himself a man of sound common sense, who established worthy, needful institutions. Throughout his life, he was a means of blessing to many, both for this life and the life to come. To how many only Eternity will reveal it.

But now his Heavenly Father has taken him to Himself, to His eternal Peace and Glory. This the Lord has done in a tender and loving way.

One Sunday night, in October, 1919, at a prayer meeting, which his younger brother lead, just after he had prayed, he was seized with cramp of the heart.

He was helped home where he spent a restless night, but he recovered somewhat, and devotedly resumed his work.

After taking a cold, however, it weakened him so much that a few weeks before Easter of the year 1920, he was obliged to take to his bed.

He was convinced it was his death summons, and he set to work to make arrangements for the future of his family, and his beloved work, with its various branches.

The Lord had so provided, in the meanwhile, that his younger brother, with whom he had, in 1883, commenced the the great work of «Shiloh» (in the tent) had been called as the minister of the congregation.

«I am going home,» the beloved invalid assured the visitors and the consulting doctor.

He said to his only child, a daughter, teacher of the Christian school: «You also will come home, but later on, you must yet work for the Lord.»

To the American doctor Morgan, who, as a friend, visited him, he said: «For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.» «Glory be to God who has given us eternal life.»

This doctor himself assured us afterwards, that he had been present at many sickbeds and deathbeds, but never had he witnessed such intense heavenly gladness on the face of the dying.

Mr. F. was a man of prayer. O, many a time I was convinced of that.

When I was oppressed at any time by some trouble I wrote

to him and soon after I felt convinced that he was praying for me, and that the Lord heard his prayer.

The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.

At one time I wrote to him about a certain man who had established himself in a surrounding where he would be doing great harm, to the congregation, the answer came:

«Pray him out of the way.»

We did move him away by prayer.

To young people, who were being trained as teachers, and who called on him at his bedside, he said: «When you will be teaching at school, be sure to teach especially the stories of the Bible.»

To his nephew, called after him, he said: «Become a man, in the strength of God.»

When he thought of his death, he said : «I have found no other ground to die on, than the Grace of God.»

And convinced of this grace he passed away into eternity, solemnly and calmly. May our last end be as peaceful as was His.

In the cemetery of Laeken, on one of the graves, is a stone with this inscription:

«To the Memory of
Mr. & Mrs. F. C.»

«Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.»

This all was what only one copy of a Bible did in the home of a Roman Catholic family in a village near Brussels.

It is the fullfilment of the promise spoken by the Lord:

«My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it.» Is. 55: 11.—

The Yearly Evangelistic Open-Air Meeting Day, 15th August, in Flanders.
Attendance : About 500 Protestants and 500 Roman Catholics.

One of our Stations in Flanders. All the Members are converted Roman Catholics.

A SERMON IN A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

How the Lathering Process is brought to bear on the Soul of Flanders.

How the Flemish Soul is Operated Upon.

I was in Flanders, in a large village, where I intended to stay over-night.

It was about seven o'clock, and as it was too early to go to bed, I took a walk through the streets. I saw numbers of people coming out of their houses. There were men, women, and even children, each of them carrying a chair and all going in the same direction. I wondered what it all meant.

At the same time, I heard the church bell ring. Then I knew. There was to be a service in the big Catholic church, and it must be a very important service, as so many people carried their own chairs. I inquired from one of the church-goers, and he told me that something particular was going on.

A Mission-sermon was to be preached. And this is indeed a great affair for our Catholic Flemish people, especially for those in small villages. Such a thing occurs only once in nine years. Priests and Dominican friars come to the village and, for nine days at a stretch, they deliver long sermons every night.

I remembered, from my childhood, how I used to attend those Mission-sermons for nine days running, and how deep an impression they always made upon me. And now, I gladly confess, I had a great desire to listen again to a Mission-sermon in a quiet village, as I did in my youth.

I went along with the stream. The church was a beautiful old building, with antique vaults restings on heavy, dreaming pillars and, here and there, a saint, who, by the wavering candlelight, with half-closed eyes, looked dreamily at the crowd.

For a big crowd had filled the church. At least three thousand persons, and still more coming; every one carrying his own chair, and trying to find a good place for it.

A strange sensation took possession of me. Old memories revived. My youth came back. The whole ceremony that made such a deep impression upon me fifteen years ago, was repeated here in exactly the same way.

And I must say that I enjoyed it. I gave my thoughts free play.

Why should not I? I came from a busy part of a big town, my head and heart full of all sorts of troubles, large and small, but all seem very large when you have to bear them yourself. O, those things can make one so tired, so awfully tired. And how good it does feel to associate with religious people, in whose midst one can shake off all those burdens. Suddenly there was silence.

A Dominican friar appeared in the pulpit. Thousands of eyes focussed themselves upon him. So did mine. In a somewhat hoarse voice the friar made some announcements and introduced the one who was to deliver the sermon. But the way in which he made this introduction seemed very queer, and not only to me, for suddenly the whole crowd roared with laughter, a tremendous Flemish laugh.

What was it he said?

He said: «To-morrow we expect the young people to come to confession. Every one must come, for yesterday, in the sermon, the priest lathered their souls and, to-day, he is going to brush them soundly.»

And, while the noise was subsiding the lather-and-brush-friar came forward. I had not much time to think of the shocking announcement. After reading some Ave-Marias the priest began his sermon.

His theme was: «The strict righteousness and the great love of God.» I forgot the first speaker and listened to the preacher. But I could not get into the right mood, however hard I tried.

The peace that had come in my soul on entering this religious environment had left, and disappointment took its place. What was this, anyhow? Was it reality and no fiction?

Alas, no. It was no fiction. The priest was on the platform, he spoke in a very loud voice, swung his arms, and every now and then, he took the image of the crucified Christ, and with it gave a rough blow on the pulpit.

Exactly the same thing that I witnessed fifteen years ago. But at that time I did not feel, what I did now, that this sermon, if I may give it that name, had very little to do with the bringing of the Gospel. And the language he used was rough, sometimes vulgar.

«God's righteousness,» he said, «Reveals itself in Hell.» And then he gave a description of Hell, so materialistic, so realistic, that one might think he was listening to a sermon of the Dark Ages.

He asked: «Is there a Hell?»

«Thieves and murderers say: No.»

«Adulterers also say: No.»

But the Gospel says: «Yes, for»—and here he raised his crucifix—«This Christ created Hell. The Gospel tells us so.»

And now followed another picture of Hell.

For a moment, I thought that the friar would quote Dante for ingenious expressions and symbols and that might have answered the purpose, but no, he travelled to the smelting-furnaces of Seraing, where iron is melted and cast into forms. The worthy friar had, at one time, visited this city. Hell, the warehouse of God's torments, is filled with fire. In order to fully realize how terrible is the suffering of the damned, it would be necessary to have some one raised from the dead and take the place of the preacher in the pulpit. So inexpressible is the torture of the lost ones, that I, friar, would willingly, here and now, give my life if I could thereby, rescue one soul from Hell. All is fire there, the blood of the lost boils constantly, the brain is full of fire, the marrow in the bones burns. Especially does this apply to the adulterers, they fall from the deathbed into a bed of fire, and when they attempt to jump off, are pushed back on it. All is fire and the worst of it is, that it lasts for ever. Imagine a clock whose hand constantly points to «Eternal,» with the pendulum ticking left: «Always burning,» and to the right «Never consumed.»

How does one get to Hell?

By reading bad literature, by seeing moving pictures, by influence of socialism. And, (this the preacher emphasized) it is unreasonable for a working-man who has so little here below, to be worse off on the other side. He'd better leave that for the rich,—those who have lived in luxury here below.

The second part of the sermon was short. The subject was: «How can we be saved from Hell?»

Answer: «We, friars, are sent to convert you. Christ instituted the sacrament of the confession. Come to-morrow to confession, all of you. Confess your sins of the past ten, twenty or thirty years. Promise that you'll never do it again,—and you are saved from Hell.»

When I left the church with the crowd I was rather dazed. I was disappointed and startled at what I had seen and heard.

I asked a villager, who was shuffling along with me toward the exit: «What do you think about it?» and he answered: «He certainly can talk, don't you think so » «Yes, surely,» I said. «But what do you think about that fire in Hell?» At that he turned around, glanced at me, with twinkling eyes, and said: «The fire of Hell, Sir, we'll blow it out, when we get there.»

And away he went.

So this was the result of the sermon. The «lather-and-brush-treatment» had been too rough for the souls, and they hid themselves behind a sneer, or behind disappointment and doubt.

No, although we gladly appreciate any religion, that is sincere and helpful to mankind, we could not appreciate this. The phraze, so often heard, that it has become worn out, was on my lips: «Poor Flanders!»

Some people, often true Christians ask: «Is it really necessary to bring the Gospel to Flanders?»

I ask you: «Is it?»

That night, after hearing that sermon, I asked myself from the bottom of my heart, how it can be possible that church-going people in Flanders can, with a free conscience, so abuse the souls of lost sinners.

I felt it again, stronger than ever before, that the soul of mankind needs the Gospel, and that especially Flander's soul is sadly in need of it.

In the village-inn, where we sat around a stove and talked about the sermon, somebody expressed his distress saying:

«Those friars will preach till we lose all our faith.»

The Flemish soul does not want the rough lather-brush of those friars, but the tender, sanctifying influence of the Gospel.

D.

MARYOLATRY.

The power of Rome is a real force in Belgium. This fact was very vividly in evidence on the eleventh of September of this year, when the Church, solemnly and with much pomp and ceremony, held a glorification of the Virgin as, «Our Lady of the Peace and Mediatress of all the Graces.»

Heathen Ephesus acclaimed, in their blindness, the Goddess Diana and raised the cry, «Great is Diana of the Ephesians.» Assuredly the culte paid to Mary in Brussels, by Cardinal Mercier, prelates of the Church from various lands, thousands of priests and monks, and ten thousand worshippers, who prostrated themselves before the effigy, must have surpassed by far the manifestation of Ephesus.

The celebration lasted five days, during which time theologians from near and far read treatises in praise and glorification of Mary. The following extracts will provide a glimpse of the theology (?)— «We cannot be regenerated by Christ without being also by Mary,» and, «It was by the Virgin Mary that Christ came to us; it is by Her that we must go to Him.»

The climax of the celebration was reached when Cardinal Mercier placed the crown, adorned with costly jewels, upon the head of the wax representation of the Virgin Mary, amidst universal signs of veneration and worship.

A telegram was sent to the Pope from Cardinal Mercier, which reads as follows:— «Thousands of priests and of the faithful assembled in Brussels, under the direction of their Bishops, to study the prerogatives of Mary, and especially her universal mediation, on the occasion of her crowning as Our Lady of the Peace, which is to take place in the name of your Holiness; address to their well-beloved father the hommage of their piety, their fealty and their entire submission, as well as their boundless devotion. They desire to express the respectful wish that soon they shall see dogmatically proclaimed the universal mediation of their mother, and solicit humbly your paternal benediction.»

This brief account of a pageant of idolatry will prove what I have pointed out in my pamphlet, that the fundamental error

of the Church of Rome is that she does not give to the Saviour of fallen, sin-blasted humanity, the place that He alone should occupy, and that the task of those who know Him is to proclaim His Messiahship and redemptive work as the sole hope for this distraught, weary world.

The organizations at work in this priest-ridden country are few and feeble in face of the task to be accomplished; we look to our enlightened friends across the Channel to come to our help by their prayers and gifts to hasten the day when:—

Jesus shall reign in Flanders' marsh,
Shall thence direct His conquering march;
Belgium shall own His gracious sway,
And every land His love obey.

AN OPEN-AIR MEETING.

Held by a Pastor, an Evangelist and a Colporteur at a Yearly Market in Flanders.

SCHELLEBELLE.

On Monday, May 31st, colporteur Joseph De Jonghe and I started out by the first train for Ghent, to go from there in company with Brother Van Kesteren to visit the Potters' Market in Schellebelle.

Schellebelle is a big village, about forty minutes distance from Ghent, by train. What a number of Roman Catholic priests were travelling that day. I had —without any special intent— taken with me a Graeco-Latin New Testament, authorized and approved by the Roman Catholic Authorities.

My spirit had been greatly stirred by the ascription of a fresh new title, and a fresh ground of adoration toward the Virgin Mary.

I had read in the Roman Catholic newspaper, «Het Nieuws van den Dag,» that His Reverence Benedict XV had approved, by a special edict on the 12th of last January, a special Service and Mass in honour of «Mary the Universal Mediator.» This is a new title ascribed to the Virgin, and the day fixed for the celebration of this ascription was May 31st, the last day of «Mary's Month.» (The title given in full is: «Mary Universal Mediator of all Graces.») «No benefit descends from heaven to earth, which has not first passed through her regal hands, and had the assent of her motherly heart. Belgium has full reason to be proud of standing high in the favour of Mary, and of being able, on May 31st, before all other lands, to celebrate the festival of her universal mediation. A land that Mary loves and favours shall never perish.»

In the railway station of Sottegem, where we had to wait half-an-hour, I sat down by a priest, and opened my New Testament at I Tim. II: 5, «*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*» The priest, at my side, looked a man of intelligence, and was of

middle age. «Reverend Father, may I ask you a question? How does the Catholic Church explain that text?» He was ready enough to speak about the doctrine of Our Lord's Humanity and His twofold nature, in all its bearings. But I directed his attention to the word «One» that stands before mediator, and I explained to him the reason of my enquiry. The Virgin Mary was now called Mediator. How did that accord with the text? Listen to the explanation that was given:

«Jesus-Christ is Mediator, by reason of the work He did, and Mary is Mediator by reason of her intercession, whereby we can obtain the fruit of that work.»

That was quite simple. It was illustrated in the usual fashion. It is always better, when you have a request to make to a King, to have a Mediator who has close relations with the King and with you, and who also has influence with the King.

«Reverend Father,» I said, «I believe that the Roman Catholic Church is wholly in error in this dogma. Read for instance Mark. III: 32-35. Jesus did not find it necessary, on that occasion, for the Virgin Mary to officiate between Him and the people: I also pointed out to him, that Paul, the greatest of the Apostles never once made an allusion to the Virgin.» To this I got no reply.

We continued our journey to Ghent, where Brother Van Kesteren joined us, bringing with him his portable organ. We also took with us about a hundred books, especially New Testaments. We were afterwards quite sorry, we had not taken three times as many with us. However, our pack was quite heavy enough.

After going along a dusty road for some fifteen minutes, we reached the market-place of the village.

What a bustle and stir reigned. A horse-market, a fair, pedlars plying all sorts of wares, round-abouts, swings and, above all, such a deafening noise that for the first moment you involuntarily felt: Gospel sounds cannot mingle with these.

But such a thought savours not of faith and courage. We sought and found a stand at last under the shadow of a walnut tree.

Not ten yards off a «Merry-go-round» was in full swing to the accompaniment of the ear-splitting music.

It was then close on eleven o'clock, and time to make a start.

The organ was put in readiness, and a circle of inquisitive onlookers soon closed round, they remarked to each other:

«These three men don't look a bad sort. But they are not ordinary frequenters of a fair.»

We started singing.

Other inquisitive people at once stood to listen. Hymn sheets were quickly disposed of, and then Brother Van Kesteren gave a short, telling explanation of our presence there.

«Take our wares. They have never been offered for sale here before.»

Singing and speaking by turn we held a number of people round us. And before an hour had passed, we had no more books and papers to sell.

We took little notice of the fair. There were standing gazing at us, very many who had never heard such messages.

There were some who resolutely held themselves aloof, in spirit.

There were others ready to sneer. But there were also others who clearly expressed kindly encouragement, and some were deeply interested. It was such a pity that we had no more books to sell, and that we were so few in number. We were obliged also to leave before the afternoon, when bigger crowds would come.

We put up our things, and were standing talking to the little groups of people, who were watching us, when a gentleman came up and said he wanted to speak to us. He was about 40 years of age.

We felt that we were going to get a good dressing down, and we were not mistaken. This man first said that the work we were doing was quite superfluous. The people of the village and the neighbourhood were very religious, all the men attended the Church and were worthy people. Why did we not go to other places amongst irreligious people? He did not wish to detract from our religion. But it behoved us to let other people's creed alone.

But that was the point at issue.

We expressed our conviction, that every creed is not a soul-saving one. Thereupon we heard the extraordinary statement that Jesus had said: «Every one could be saved through his own creed.»

«Thus teach the heretics, and they are quite astray, called out our colporteur, quoting the Romanish Catechism.»

The standers-by followed the conversation with increasing interest.

The last statement we drew on this point from this gentleman was: «That missionaries amongst the heathen could very well stop at home. That the Christian religion ought to bring a deal more happiness and peace into this life.»

I spoke then of my conversation with the priest at Sottegem, and we had fresh opportunity to witness of the love of God our Father and of the Lord Jesus-Christ.

At this juncture, the gentleman, who had been talking with us, asked if we ascribed no special merit to the Virgin Mary, and, in response to our negative reply, he spoke of the miracles of Our Lady of Lourdes.

We will not take up the challenge of these miracles was our reply, but similar miracles could be effected without the Virgin and without Christ.

«How could that be?»

Through hypnotism, as for example amongst the Fakirs. But I got no further opportunity to touch on this.

Our opponent did his best to get away from the subject. The corroboration given him by a strange voluble man, who had been in India, must have been far from agreeable.

We were next questioned as to confession amongst Protestants. «Did it exist?»

«Yes,» certainly, we replied.

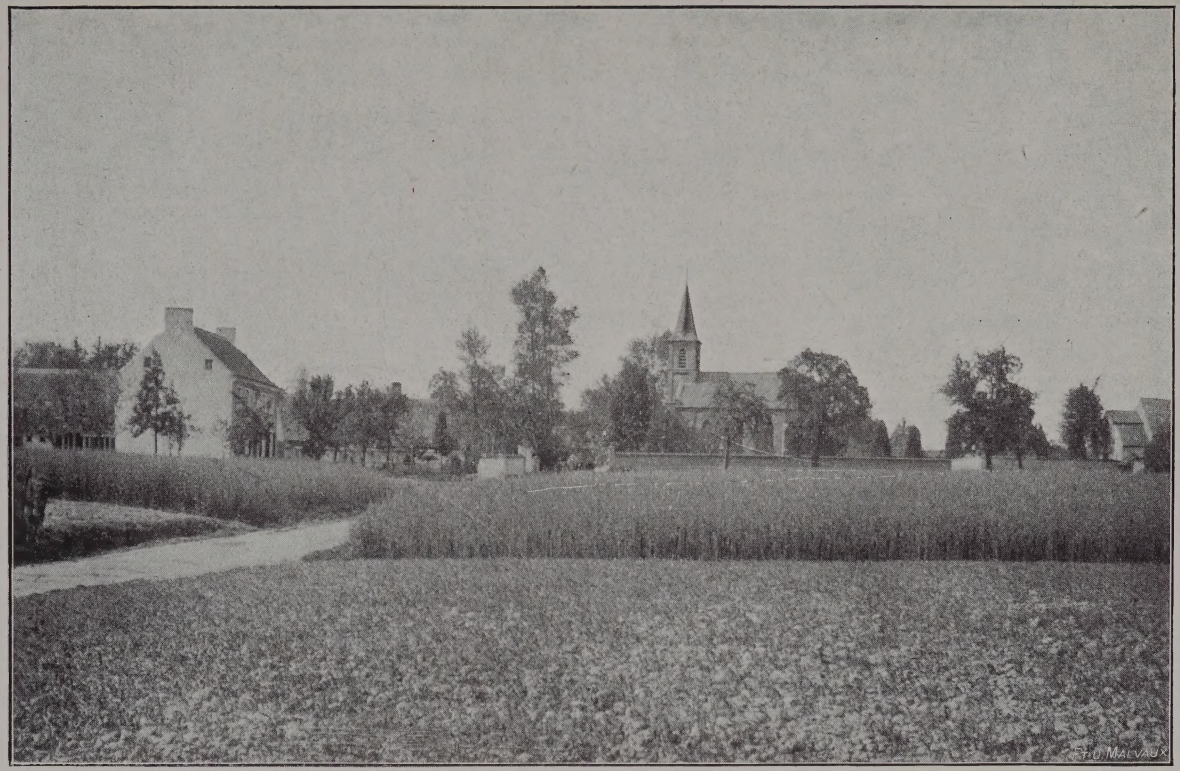
«Yes,» said our opponent, «but, do you, Friends know of what sort it is?»

«A Protestant steals a purse, then he goes into his private room and confesses to God that he has stolen a purse and asks forgiveness while he keeps the purse in his pocket. But when a Catholic confesses to the priest, he avowes his guilt and the priest receives the purse and hands it to the rightful owner. Protestant confession is very easy.»

«Not so easy,» I cried, «as that of the gentleman.»

«Listen,» and I sprung on a chair, and the people stood thick round me. «My friends, the Protestant, who stole the purse and kept it in his pocket did not really confess. Acting as the gentleman here suggests he did, would only make him guilty of another sin. He would have been a hypocrite, a deceiver. Such a confession avails nothing before God. Such sin He could not forgive. True confession before God comes from

Out of all the Protestant Congregations in Flanders in the 16th Century only one was spared, the Congregation of Maria Hoorebeke. Until 1795, the Divine Service was held in this farm house, first, only after dark; since 1781 it had been allowed in the day The House had in the cellar a hiding-place for the Pastor, in case of danger.



The present Protestant Church of Maria Hoorebeke.

the depths of a sin-burdened heart, is ever accompanied by full reparation as far as it is possible of the wrong done. Then there is remission, and how,» I added, «do you make your confession? do you tell the priest everything? I know many Romanists who don't.»

«Your confession to the priest is also absolutely worthless, if your heart at the same time is not burdened before the living God with the sense of its guilt. The priest's absolution is no absolution unless you are acquitted by God Himself. God alone can give absolution, not man.»

I got down from my chair.

It was time for us to go. As we made our way through the crowd we noted many signs of favorable impression. One old man pressed up to us and told how gladly he had listened to us.

But we were not away yet.

The people now formed themselves into whole groups, round each member of our party. Many good and assuring words were spoken. I was really amazed at the assurance and liberty, with which we had been enabled to speak.

And yet there was really no ground for astonishment. We had made preparation in prayer and meditation though we could not know beforehand, what would be required of us. I felt constrained once more to approach the man who had been our chief opponent.

—Sir, be sure, it is far easier to confess to a priest than to God.

But, nevertheless He is there and you can speak to Him.

—Yes, but the priest is the visible substitute of God, to whom to make confession.

—Sir, if the invisible God prescribed your making confession to Him, why do you still address Him in the Lord's Prayer? (Our Father.) You should rather address your prayer to the priest. But that you don't do.

There was not further reply. We now really bade all farewell, promising to return the following year.

And had it all been satisfactory?

Yes, we are of that opinion.

The opportunity came to us unsought.

We had been exasperated by our opponents.

We sought in what we said to lift up the living Christ to those who do not know Him. There are people who are seeking ever fresh mediators. Mary is now Queen of Heaven.

How long will it be permitted to approach her without a mediator.

And thus remains, as it were, the chasm between heaven and earth. The would-be mediator stands always on the other unattainable side of the chasm.

Jesus-Christ is Emmanuel, «God with us.» He has become one with us. He has made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

He who approached Him, approached the Father.

He who beholds Him, beholds the Father.

He who is in Him, is in the Father.

*
* *

Many ask, who will guide and counsel us if we have no father confesser, to show us the way?

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have Eternal life.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my paths.

God himself will lead the one who earnestly and with desire searches the Scriptures.

Brother de Jonge remarked, travelling home, that if the work is to be carried on earnestly, as it ought to be, it must have the prayer, support and cooperation of the whole Community.

To preach the Gospel is no mere pastime. We should preach to the glory of God and of the Love of Christ, with hearts moved with compassion, and that, alone, is possible when we do it in a spirit of prayer.

J. J. H. V.

On the market, in Schellebelle, we were only three speakers, which is not sufficient for a market meeting of 2 or 3 hours.

In general, we are more numerous, and, if possible, we have the help of some singers when the meeting is held near a Protestant congregation.

THE GOSPEL IN GEERAARDSBERGEN (GRAMMONT.)

(A town of about 12,000 Inhabitants.
As industry: Matches, tobacco and black silk lace.)

In our Protestant reports, the name of Grammont is written in letters of blood.—December 1566, a meeting of the faithful was taken by surprise: 12 Protestants were slain, 22 were hung, 30 were beaten.

Nothwithstanding these bloody persecutions, Protestantism seems to have been maintained some time, to eventually disappear completely. After three centuries, in 1854, an effort of evangelization was made by the Belgian Missionary Church, an effort which was soon suppressed in blood and tears. Meetings were held in the house of the Protestant, Jacques Debacker, he had to pay, with his life, for his fidelity to the Gospel. This event is related by the annual report of the «Société Evangélique,» as follows:

«The meetings in this town, causing considerable hostile demonstrations, obliged the brother in whose home they were held, to go around from time to time, to look after the crowd in the street. One evening, at the moment that the mob was dispersing, he came in again, staggering, blood running down his face, from a deep wound on the forehead, He expired an hour afterwards, without having time to give any explanation. We may take it for granted, that the wound did not result from a fall (as Catholic people told afterwards), but from a blow, struck by the enemy. The few remaining faithful people in Grammont, left this unholy place, and we were obliged to give up all hope of founding a congregation.»

Fifty years after these events, in 1905, the Rev. J. Chrispeels attempted a second effort. At one of the first meetings, which he held in the workshop of an organ-manufacturer, the first people to enter, were two well-dressed women, none less than the grand-daughters of Protestant Jacques Debacker, killed in 1854.

In 1906, an evangelist was able to settle down at Grammont,

and since then a regular work has been carried on, which brings forth blessed fruits, for there, as well as everywhere, the Gospel of Jesus-Christ, has proved itself as the power of God to save those who believe. About 20 families have joined the congregation, and others will follow.

Lately, however, a big cloud has cast its shadow upon this field. By the conditions of the lease the house which we occupied, we had to leave on the 1st August, as the proprietor intended to inhabit it himself. All attempts to hire another building, were in vain. Nothing to let, neither lodgings, for the evangelist and his family, nor hall for the services. Great was our disappointment, but this increased our prayer, and God has shown us how He fulfills the wishes of His Children.

Two Brussels friends united their efforts to buy a house that they will let to us. Our joy is great, and we are thankful for this excellent solution of our difficulty. This building contains a lodging for the evangelist, and by some transformations, a hall can be provided for services, school, and Y.M.C.A. We are busy arranging these necessary transformations, which are now very expensive, owing to actual prices of materials and work. The whole rebuilding will cost about 50 thousand francs, at least.

The Lord has provided, and at this present time, all expenses have been paid. The work continues, and is being blessed.

It is now composed of : A work of evangelization, a Protestant school and a training school for young evangelists.

The blood of the martyrs has shown itself, to be the foundation of the Church. After days of trouble, «The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.»

BIBLE COLPORTAGE.

A Stony Heart as Cold as Ice. — An Earnest Ardent Soul.

It was a cold, rainy day. Among those, who hastily stepped out of the train, was a Bible-colporteur with a bag, heavily laden with books. Shivering with cold and somewhat afraid of the unknown, which was awaiting him again, he approached the village, lying at some distance. The wet roofs of the houses shone in a dead glass. The doors were all firmly shut. Nobody durst put his nose out of doors in this cold, wet weather. The country-women, surely, were mending their stockings behind the covered window-panes. The barn-doors, however, were open here and there, half-shut by a bundle of straw, firmly pushed together, to keep out the wind with its cold-breath. And there behind the doors the peasants stood threshing careless of ought beside.

The dull blows of their flails sounded in the empty street and lost themselves in the wide, deserted fields. The colporteur opened the strings of his bag, looked at his Gospels, New Testaments, and «Glad Messages,» which had been packed there, clean and fresh, carrying the words of Life, and then looking at the smoke of those chimneys, he became possessed of a strong courage and a burning desire to speak to those people, living there so unconcerned, of the blessed comforting Gospel.

Walking on, he soon arrived at a large, neat looking inn. Boldly he pushed open the rattling glass door. He entered, and stood in a neat tap-room. The red flags of the floor were freshly-cleaned, and covered with sand, which slightly cracked under his feet. The side-board, tables, and chairs shone like a mirror. Here was order, good taste and care. The inhabitants could not be indifferent to good things.

This encouraged the colporteur and he stood there, as if nobody should put a straw in his way, or say him an evil word. Without fear, he just coughed, stamped on the floor, and called: «Holla.»

In the kitchen, a chair was slowly moved, and after a

moment, the master, an old peasant of about seventy years of age, entered the tap-room, making much noise. The colporteur approached him, took a «Glad Message,» and gave it to the peasant saying: «I bring you a nice little newspaper, which speaks of the way to heaven. The peasant looked at the colporteur from head to foot, to see if he wore no priestly dress, or monk's hood, stared with astonishment at the man, who came in an inn, to speak of God... and then speaking out what was in his old head, he exclaimed:— «I do not want that, my friend, heaven is too far away.»

«Yes, but I give you this paper for nothing.»

The peasant caught the offered newspaper with his fingers, crooked by working, and went on: «We shall see yonder what it is like when we get there. I am not going to trouble myself with that in my old age.»

«It is now high time for you to think of it quietly and peacefully, and to seek God, to find rest in Him, for you will not live many more years,» answered the colporteur.

The peasant just fumbled his «Glad Message,» lifted his head, began to laugh as an old drunkard, so that two dimples came in his cheeks and said:

«When I die it will be «Pardouf, pardof I am off.»

The colporteur was startled at such an extravagant indifference and mockery. Meanwhile, the old man asked, incredulously:— «Just tell me truly, do you believe that there is a heaven and a life hereafter?»

Here the colporteur advanced some steps and said frankly and fervently, glad that he might testify of that which made him happy.

«Certainly, I believe that there is a heaven, and more still, that there is a Father who loves us so much that He has given His own Son to suffer and to die on the Cross for you and me.»

With tears in his eyes the colporteur implored:— «Oh, old man, just read this Gospel, and you will see what the Lord Jesus has suffered all for you, before you were born, and what beautiful, comforting words He has spoken of heaven and God. Buy such a little book and examine it, you will be so glad afterwards.»

The peasant's wordly heart remained untouched, and as if there was spoken here of something written by liars, without any value at all, he answered, speaking very slowly:

«Anything may be written on paper, my friend.» Meanwhile, he went slipshod to the front door just saying:— «Let

us not speak any more of these things for it is an unpleasant subject. It is not worth while to talk much about it.»

With his hands deep in his pockets he went out of doors, looked at the dark sky, hanging threateningly over them and said to the colporteur, who had followed him:—

«We will have storm again, and much cold. I shall go in, it is not pleasant here, my friend.» And with his grey head drawn between his shoulders and his back high, he went into the inn. The colporteur followed him and asked:—

«Shall we still have a little talk in the room?»

But, pushing the door to, and preventing him from entering, the peasant answered:—

«No, it is no business of mine.»

This interview touched the colporteur to his very soul, and he sighed:

«So this is the result of many years indifference and great ignorance. Thus my people will spiritually be ruined. Oh, how very unfortunate.» But instead of disheartening him, it awakened all his love for his people. He felt something of the compassion which filled his Master's heart when He spoke to His poor people. And the whole day the colporteur spoke more earnestly to all, whom he met. The people must have felt it, for they eagerly listened to him and bought many of his books.

This shows a stony heart, as cold as ice. But in the following visit I got acquainted with an earnest ardent soul.

THE BARBER OF THE PRIEST.

I was with my friend, O. Dedecker, with whom I used to visit the villages in the neighbourhood of Brussels. At a few hours distance of the town, we had visited several houses and sold nearly all our books, so we intended to go home. On our way to the town, my friend said:—

«I just have one more New Testament, which I should still like to sell.»

As we were speaking, right in front of a house, we decided to pay a visit there. So together we entered the dwelling.

It was noon. The father, a short, big husbandman, with clear eyes, and a little mouth, dressed in a red undervest, was sitting at the table, his chair leaning against the wall. Next to him was sitting his little daughter, and then the mother, a tall, stout woman. My friend praised and offered his New Testament in simple language, until the woman interrupted him, saying:—

«Why, lad, we have a great many books. A box full, in our garret. Of all sorts and thick ones... as thick as that loaf there, look.»

So from this quarter there was little interest. Yet, we wished to explain the priceless and indispensable contents of our little book, but the father pushed his cap to the back of his neck, put his chair straight, and asked full of enthusiasm:

«What book is that, you say?»

«The New Testament, that tells the life of our Lord Jesus-Christ, His works and His miracles, His bitter suffering and His death and ascension, further it contains the epistles of the Holy Apostles, which teach us the true religion and finally the Apocalypse of St. John.»

«Is that the book out of which the priest preaches on Sundays?»

«When he preaches out of the Gospel, yes.»

«Why, yes the Gospel I would say. But is it quite true, that this is the book, where he gets his sermons?»

«As true as we stand here before you, for there is but one Gospel.»

«Why, then I must have it, for I have been looking for it such a long time. I am the barber of the priest, sometimes I go three times a week to his house and talk with him of the Gospel, but he never will let me read it. But now I will have it and I will read it... to be sure.»

Our earnest conversation was broken off by a neighbour, a woman, who came to lend a dog. The mistress asked her: «Did you ever buy such a book, Mene?» The woman answered, with the most indifferent face in the world, and in a tone which greatly injured our cause and the Lord's cause:

«Why, no. What do those books matter to me? They may be good for the rich, who have plenty of time, but we all have something else to do. And moreover, when those books are once read, they lie about here and there, till the children destroy them,» answered the woman.

Happily, the man entered with the dog, and indifferent Mene walked out of the door behind her draught animal.

After that we once more had an earnest conversation with the father.

But it was as if the evil one knew, that we could find here something good, for once more and in a more dangerous manner our intercourse on eternal things was interrupted. A little boy, about twelve years old, came in with an attitude, as if he was chief and master here, watched us with spying glances, went directly to the inner room, saying hurriedly:

«Father, just come here, I want to tell you something.»

The woman looked at the man, the man at the woman, and I at my friend.

The father left us for a moment, and directly we heard the whispering of a child, followed by the deep sound of a man's voice, which asked only: «What?» and then once more, and, lower still, the same whispering.

My friend and I directly understood the whole affair. Like those who have to defend a newly-won fortress we stood firm, waiting to see what was going to happen.

The father came back in the sitting room, and asked:

«Is it true that you are Protestants?»

Almost together we answered frankly, not ashamed of the truth:

«Yes, happily, we are Protestant.»

That frank answer pleased the barber. Once more he looked at us from head to foot, took the book, which lay on

the table. once more in his hand, then said, calmly and friendly:

«Why, that does not matter. You possess the book out of which the priest makes his sermons, and which can teach me religion, that is all I want. And, moreover, you are much talked of, and it is said that you are better than we. And there is something true in that, for you are doing more than the priest, you bring us the Gospel. What he does not, you do. So I will buy that book. I wish to know matters as they are. Do you have other books also?»

«The explanation of the Lord's Prayer.»

«Why, I will take those two books, but as I take two, you must let me have them a little cheaper.»

We readily left him the books for a few pence less.

After having talked some minutes more about the Gospel, we took our leave and went home, while the priest's barber called after us:

«Now I shall be able to read it myself.»

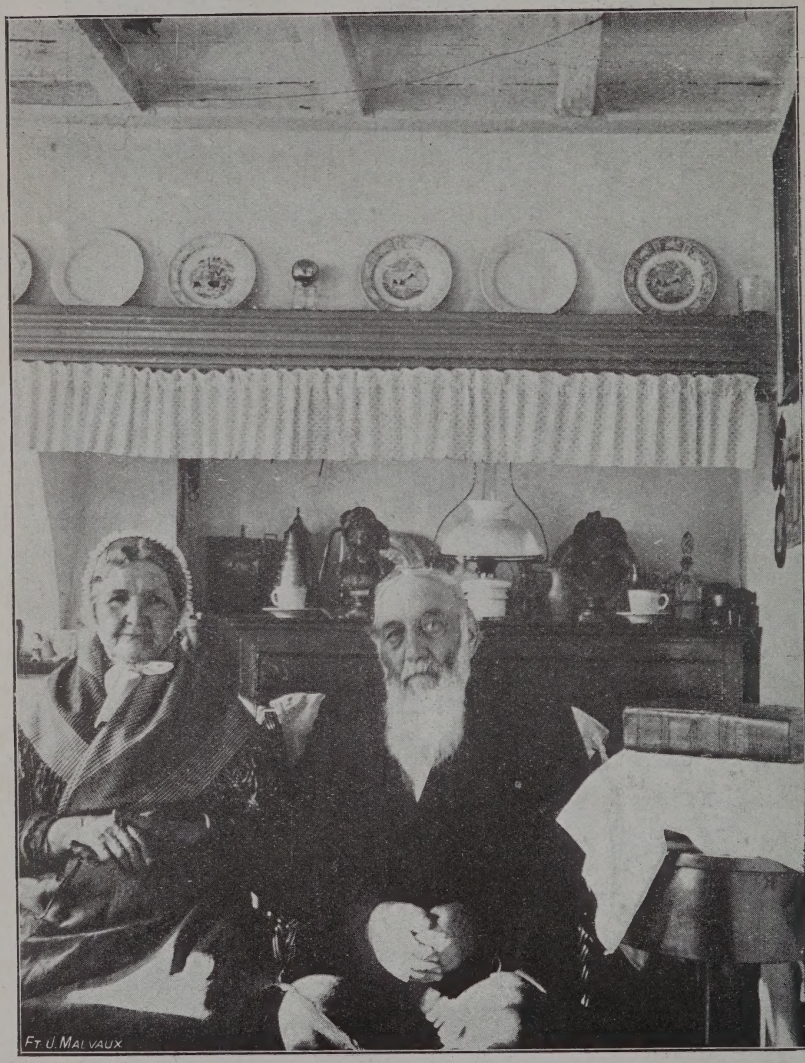
Surely here we had found unexpectedly a seeking soul.

* * *

Colportage is continually thwarted by the priests, which is to be expected when we remember their point of view. But, meanwhile, we are made to feel that opposition only too well and in a sad way. The next encounter I had with a priest shows us a peculiar personality.

D.

Crowning of the image of the Virgin Mary in Brussels, in 1921, as "Our Lady of Peace, and Mediator of all Graces."



The late Colporteur Verleye and his good wife in their little rural house.

A VISIT OF A BIBLE-COLPORTEUR TO A PRIEST.

In a village, about three hours distance from Brussels, where I was in the habit of selling Bibles and Christian literature from door to door, I, one day, called on a priest, with the object of selling also to him, some of my books. I went boldly up and rang the big bell, I could hear even outside its harsh clang. After waiting for a little while, an old maid servant, somewhat bent with age, came and with a serious look on her face let me in. The iron gate was fastened with a heavy chain and padlock. As soon as I was inside, the gate was closed and locked behind me, whilst the dog, chained in his kennel near the house door, began to bark furiously.

My good guide brought me into a big wide room, where I had to await the priest. Whilst I stood there, and looked all around me, I noticed that this waiting-room was very different to an ordinary room. In the corner, on my left hand, stood a big oaken cupboard, which must have dated back a good long way, a second stood just in front of me, close to a table, which was so old that it must have passed from one owner to another many times before it reached its present destination. The furniture was profusely decorated with all sorts of old pottery and coloured crockery, iron pots and pans, copper lamps and lanterns.

Above the cupboard, stood images of the Virgin and Joseph, blackened and defaced with age, surrounded by various copper and silver candle-sticks.

In the chimney-corner hung a big gilded wooden crucifix, above and below it, the wall was covered with iron locks, church door bolts, and a valuable green porcelain holy-water vessel.

Before I could well take it all in, the priest, a man of about fifty years of age, came in, he was smoking a little wooden pipe.

After exchanging a friendly greeting, I explained my business to him. Sir, I travel with Christian books, and I am able to offer you an excellent one at a low price. It is written by one of our most worthy writers.....

«Oh. Sir. I don't require that. I should certainly not buy it. I don't read.»

«Do not your parishioners read, Sir?»

«Happily not.»

«But, Sir, is that really a happy circumstance? Reading always improves and refines a man's taste and mind, developes good seeds of thought and virtue, and provides a pleasant and profitable occupation.»

«That's quite true, but I would much rather they did not read, above all not books. There are far too many bad books.»

«But Christian books. What about them?»

«My good man. Why should my parishioners read? I am here to teach them, all that they need to know.»

«That is a big task, Sir.»

«It is certainly not easy, but we are well organized. We have here a Peasant's Union, a Saving's-Bank, a Young Men's organization, and a singing class, which lasts on Sunday evenings till nine o'clock. The chaplain sees to the young men and the singing class, whilst I look after the older men and the Peasants' Union. That gives me a lot of work. We have seven members who keep public houses and have a large hall. Every Sunday afternoon, after five o'clock, we and the members visit the seven public houses. There we drink a pot of beer together and talk over business, and midst laughter and talking, I give them a little sermon. So we teach them all they need to know.»

«But, Sir, there is so much ill gossip in public houses and they often drink heavily. Ought *you* to be there?»

«Yes, of course, and I also smoke a pipe with them. We go and sit in the corner together. In my parish they drink hardly anything but beer, and you could drink a whole barrel of that beer, without being intoxicated.»

«But drinking too much has had results.»

«He who drink's too much becomes only an idle loon.»

«Would it not be well to start total abstinence in your parish.»

«Come, come, a man is not a duck, that he should take to nothing but water.»

Drinking has been for generations a habit, amongst our people. Julius Caesar said: «The Belgians are the best fighters and the biggest drinkers.»

«Does not a powerful sermon convert a drunkard?»

«Certainly not. Spiritual methods are no sort of use. I have quite a natural method, putting an eel into the gin.»

«I don't understand you.»

«Well. I take an ordinary bottle of gin, and I put an alive eel into it. If there is any one in my parish, who is a slave to gin, I call him in here, and give him a talking to about drunkeness. Then I say to him don't take any more of the bad gin from the public house, but have this bottle of mine. He will not have emptied half the bottle, before he is turned against it for good. It is a complete cure.»

Whilst we had been talking, we had remained standing. I with my hat in my hand, and my books under my arm, and the priest with his hands in his pockets.

Slowly we went towards the door, talking freely all the time. The priest spoke in a easy, cheerful way, as he would do at a peasants' gathering.

There hung in the passage a big shield covered with bows and arrows, axes and cudgels. As I looked at them, rather inquiringly, the priest said:

«These are weapons from the Congo, which I got from missionaries.»

«Do you know, Sir, that there are also Protestant missionaries in the Congo?»

«Yes, there are. They come everywhere. But much harm won't come of it. They are idle fellows. Our Church has no need to fear them.»

So far went our conversation. Such priests are to be found all over our country. Happily there are some exceptions. Is it not scandalous that such men should teach our people in their best and highest concerns. How can they be otherwise than ignorant and dull in spiritual matters? So long as they drink and play cards, slavishly follow what the priest says, and above all, if they don't read books especially they are counted good sort of people. Such people are esteemed and held up as an exemple by the bishop and his subordinates, the priest told me this with pride.

Oh, in what a miserable condition a people are, who are plentifully supplied with such spiritual leaders.

To thus lay bare the miserable condition of our people, brings us no merit, adds nothing to our happiness. Rather do we tell it with sorrow of heart, and with the appeal to God's children to help our work by their spiritual and material support.

And may all, who are freed from the power of darkness, hold fast what they have, and rejoice, as they read this record, in the light of the Gospel, which shines so fully upon them.

VERLEYE.

A Flemish Colporteur.

Fifty years ago, a carpenter was working at the stockade at Ostend. A gentleman happened to pass by and said to him: «It is very dangerous work, you are doing there, my friend.»

«Oh, one can die but once,» answered the carpenter, a little under the impression of the fact that cholera was epidemical just then.

«Provided that you are assured of your bliss after death.»

«But, how can one be sure of that, Sir?»

«Why, there is a book which teaches us so, the New Testament.» And the gentleman speaking of the happiness in Jesus-Christ succeeded so well in rousing the interest of Verleye for the Gospel, that Verleye asked him:

«And where can I get that book?»

«You need only come to my house, I live in the Maria street.»

And the carpenter promised to pay the pastor a visit the next Sunday, that carpenter was the roman Catholic Verleye, that gentleman was the pastor Evangelist Koettlitz.

Verleye however durst not visit the pastor, but asked for a New Testament at a library. In vain. In poor Flanders the booksellers do not even know the New Testament, that book of books, but they do know among others «The Key of Dreams.» The bookseller warned Verleye against Mr. Koettlitz, as if he was a devil, buying the souls in order to destroy them.

On Monday, Mr. Koettlitz visited once more the carpenter at the stockade, reproached him for not having held his promise, and invited him once more to come and visit him. Verleye went to the pastor's, came back very often and learned to know the Gospel.

To became a Protestant, however, at that time in a country town of Flanders, one needed the courage and faith of a martyr. It was at that time that the pupils of a grammar

school ran through the streets singing: «Down with the Protestants. Down with the Beggars. Kill them, kill them.»

Yes, at that time, one needed the faith and courage of a martyr to profess the Gospel of Christ, and Stephen Verleye possessed that faith and that courage, and would have followed the first Christian martyr, whose name he bore. He has proved it in the course of the persecutions, he has had to endure. Though he was a good workman, he was dismissed by his master, as he would no longer work on Sundays, and though an honest man, he was driven out of his house, and as he could not find another lodging he was obliged to take with his wife and children refuge in the house of his pastor, the policeman having threatened him that he would put his furniture under the tree in front of the house. When Verleye took the key of the house together with the rent to the owner, she threw the money after him crying:

«I won't have the money of a devil.»

Six months afterwards the policeman himself was lying under a tree in the churchyard, and the owner who had a prosperous business became a bankrupt and had to leave his house.

As to Verleye, he persevered and found at last work and lodgings.

To thwart the plans of his relations who would have taken the children to have them educated in a convent, he established himself at Maria-Hoorebeke, he there followed his trade, till the Scottish National Bible Society took him in its service as a colporteur, residing at Maria-Hoorebeke. And Verleye has been a good colporteur, diligent, brave; as a former Roman Catholic, he has been able to fight the errors of Roman Catholicism, and as a good Christian and well up in Bible knowledge, he has been able to fight sin and to preach the Gospel of life. As it is generally the case with every converted Catholic, he was an anti-papist and manifested it sometimes in a mocking manner, when for instance he heard the ringing of the church bell for a funeral, he could not refrain from saying:

«Bim, bom, bam
«Pieces of five francs.»

The Pope was, for him nobody else but the Antichrist. But if he could thunder against the Pope, he was ever more willing to speak of Jesus-Christ, and of His work of love.

Though he only commenced at the age of 52, he has done during 22 years the rough work of a colporteur in ignorant

and fanatic Flanders, covering great distances to go from village to village, along difficult roads, in winter often unpraticable, and what was more difficult still, trying to find the way to the hearts of the people averse to the Gospel.

But Verleye succeeded.

For instance. Arriving one day at a village, it seemed to him that the villagers had got wind of his arrival, for soon they cried from all sides: «Go away with your bad books.»

«And how do you know that they are bad? You have not yet seen them.»

«The priest has told us so.»

«In that case, he must have spoken of other books, for mine are good, and to prove to you what I say, I will go straight to the priest, to show him my books.»

The people followed him.

The colporteur rang the bell, the servant opened the door.

«Is the priest at home, I should like to sell him a nice book.»

«Go away with your bad books,» cries a voice from a room. It was the voice of the priest, who understood what book was spoken of, for in Flanders nobody comes to sell books but the colporteurs of Bibles.

«And why are they bad?»

So the priest and Verleye entered into a discussion, without seeing each other. But Verleye approached a step or two at every answer and found himself at last in the priest's room. He spoke there so long and so well, that at last when he took his leave of the priest, he was conducted in a very friendly manner to the front door of the house, where the parishioners were waiting. Seeing what had happened, they were at first astonished but, afterward reassured, they bought several volumes.

In another village the children are incited against him and surround him insulting him with the name of «Antichrist» (a name which was given to Verleye in more than one village.)

Verleye turns round and says, in a fatherly tone of voice: «Are you Christians? and don't you know your Catechism? Have not you learned: Which is the greatest of all virtues? Love, for without love, neither faith nor hope are useful to our salvation. And is it love when you insult me, who have not wronged you in the least.» This answer had its effect.

Elsewhere after much persuasion a farrier takes several books, throws them on the fire of his forge in presence of

several neighbours and of Verleye, and made the bellows blow. But Verleye filled with holy indignation cried in the tone of a prophet:

«You burn the word of God, you child of a mortal man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils, as you burn the word of God, God will burn you one day.»

Such words brought the people to reflection.

How many villages has he not visited, leaving them the words of truth and grace. We see him yet setting out on his expedition early in the morning, the man with the beautiful, white beard, his head covered with a broad-brimmed hat, on his back the bag filled with books, in his hand a stick for support.

How many times his honest wife was uneasy about him, when he stayed away.

«How late father is coming back to night, children.»

But father trudged patiently on, over the low and gloomy roads of East Flanders, or on the lonely footpaths across the high plains.

At how many doors has he not knocked. How many copies of the Word of God has he not sold, to how many souls has he not preached the happiness to be found in Jesus-Christ, and how many souls have not been blessed by his books and his words:

«The day shall declare it.»

Our brother has worked till he can work no more, and he has given his bag to the young and brave Brother De Jonge, from Maria-Hoorebeke.

Verleye died in the peace of his Redeemer, and in the hope of the resurrection, 84 years old, after 58 years of happy married life.

Our brother rests from his labours, and his works do follow him. In the district, where formerly he worked alone, as the first pioneer of the Gospel, in face of so much difficulty, there are now three brothers at work, namely colporteur De Jonge and the Evangelists of Renaix and Grammont.

Therefore, my beloved brethern, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

OUR WORK IN DUNKIRK (FRANCE).

Among Sailors and Flemish people.

It is now some years ago, that on one occasion, when I was at our Flemish Sailors' Home in Dunkirk, standing in the hall, on the ground floor, that I noticed three men, standing before the window, who not only gave evidence of surveying and reading with considerable interest, the book that lay open before the window, but who also showed plainly their desire to come inside.

I opened the door and spoke to them, as I always did on similar occasions.

«Yes,» they said, «they would very much like to come in; they should be so glad to get the loan of a book.»

Specially was this the case with one of them, a man of genuine Flemish type and apparently quite 60 years of age. Though at first, rather hesitant of entering a Protestant house, (for he was a Roman Catholic) his impression must have been favourable for, after a short time of friendly conversation, he exclaimed, spontaneously: «I clearly see, that the people I am with here, are good.» He took away with him some books, amongst others, the Bible, which he had wished all his life long, one day to be able to handle and read.

The others, who accompanied him, were his son, who worked with him, for he was a master-mason, and his bricklayer, an old drunkard, who had shown him the way to our home, in the hope of his being able to borrow a book there. Father V. was rather deaf, and therefore could not enjoy much conversation at home, and on this account took great pleasure in reading. He had been unable anywhere in Dunkirk to get a Flemish book, and was therefore delighted when his bricklayer, who had been present at some of our meetings, told him that Flemish books were to be had at our Home.

This man's deafness was the first means God used to bring him to a knowledge of the Gospel. This did not come all at once for when God works, it is always deep and thorough.

As I had got his address, I had opportunity to visit the

The Training-School for Evangelists.

Group of Belgian Soldiers who, during the War, learned to know the Gospel in Holland, and formed there a Bible-Class, under the guidance of our Evangelist Decoster.

family, and the loan of books always gave me an introduction, and this introduction opened the way for conversation. It was a far greater trial than deafness which was the means used to lead this man into the light. His eldest daughter, about 25 years of age, became very ill, and was brought to the gates of death. Although none of the family had yet set a foot in our meeting place, —very, very, strict Catholics,— yet I had always a welcome when I called. How seriously had these friends, according to their light, prayed for the daughter's recovery. But God's thoughts are higher than those of men. The sickness increased, and seeing the end was near I sought to comfort the mother, saying amongst other things that God, in His infinite wisdom, sometimes sends us some great trial, to really save us in His love from some far greater misfortune. She understood and fully assented, quite seeing the connection between these words and the daughter's real condition. After she had received from the priest the communion, I came back to see her and pointed out the true meaning of partaking in the communion, Christ's body and blood, that it is a sign and seal of Christ's sacrifice in our stead, whereby God gives us assurance that He gives us through Christ's one and all sufficient sacrifice for us remission of sins and eternal life.

Having to travel away the next day, I bade her farewell and sent her, from home, before leaving, some words of consolation, amongst other the words of the hymn:

Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul take rest.

When I had returned from my journey, the daughter had passed away. The following Sunday the whole family came to our meeting. God had been working in all the sad events, the bitter trial had led to prayer, and prayer had brought light and help. Even the conduct of the priest had assisted. When home, after the funeral, he had sent immediately the sexton to feteh the payment for the funeral. The family were indignant at this act of greed on the part of the priest, who had always spoken of them as his best parishioners and with whom they had been on very friendly terms. Indeed, in all the religious processions, the father had always carried the lantern, the sons the baldachin over the priest's head and the daughters the image of the Virgin. But their indignation grew beyond

bounds when the mother, a few days after the funeral, went to pay the priest. He had often consoled her, when the daughter lay ill, with the assurance, that she would certainly go to heaven when she died. But now, when the mother again asked him if he was sure that she was in heaven, the heartless man had for the sake of gain, the affrontery to say: «I fear that she lies suffering in purgatory, and, if I were you, I would have some masses said for her.» The mother had learned of late too much of Evangelical teaching to be unaware of the fact, that the merciless priest only spoke thus to get money from her.

From that time, as I have already said, the whole family attended our meetings, at first after attending mass, later on without attending it. I had never spoken to them or to any one else one word about this. They came of their own accord. There was a special reason for their ceasing to attend mass, which is considered by Catholics a great sin.

«Sir,» said the father to me one day, when I visited him, «I used to think it was a great sin to neglect the Mass, but the Bible says: The Mass is an act of accursed idolatry.»

I was not a little taken aback when he said this, because I thought this statement would greatly scandalize him. I felt, therefore, rather glad to say to him, that there was nothing like that in the Bible.

He stuck, however, to his point and fetched the Bible and opened it at one of the last pages.

Yes, it stood there in black on white, in a Protestant catechism, which was included at the end of the Bible, a fact I had been unaware of. I also did not know that he had read this catechism many times and found a great help and consolation in it, that when he came to the words, «The Mass is an act of accursed idolatry,» though, at first, he was somewhat taken aback, yet he knew already so much of the teaching of the Gospel, that it did not upset him. This had led him to think much about the mass, and little by little he had come to the conclusion that he could fully assent to that judgment of the mass. The knowledge of the Bible, that he had acquired through reading it, as well as his conversations with me over what he had read, helped him to this conviction. Whenever I went to see him, he would fetch the Bible and had many things to ask, this is often the case with these who attend our meetings.

Naturally enough, when the family V. had fully grasped the

nature of the mass, they fully renounced it, although they had in previous times looked for salvation through it.

Thus had the Lord broken the bands of Rome, and what He effects is always lasting.

The priest of the parish (a suburb of Dunkirk), did not only learn through officious neighbours that the family V. was attending the Protestant Meeting, he could see it himself by their absence from his church and the confessional. As a faithful shepherd, he made an effort to bring these lost sheep to the true fold.

One day he paid them a visit and, after discussing the wind and the weather, he asked the mother, who alone was at home, if the son would help him again in the procession.

«I don't think so,» said the mother.

«How is that? Has he turned Protestant?»

«Well, reverend Father, it is not wrong to become Protestant.»

«What, Madam V., is it possible, what you who were my best parishioners, can abandon your faith and go over to the Protestants? I have studied the Protestant Teaching, it is no true faith.»

«Reverend Father, I have learned through the Protestant teaching to know the Gospel and the Saviour, hitherto I had been perfectly ignorant, for the Church of Rome teaches us to put our trust in men, in the Virgin and the Saints, and has not the Lord Jesus said: «Come unto *Me,* all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.» I have found in Him, what I early sought in vain with the Virgin and the Saints.»

«Yes, certainly, the Saviour has thus spoken, but the Church preaches us that the Virgin and the Saints are our mediators and we must obey the Church, but if you won't obey the Church, you must know, I have done my duty. «Good Day.»

«Good day, Reverend Father.»

* * *

I met the father V. one day, and, in reply to my question as to how he was, he said that spite of all his prayers and supplications he had not yet full assurance that his sins were forgiven.

I perceived that he was still seeking to gain forgiveness, through his prayers and supplications and that as the hart desires the waterbrooks, so greatly did he thirst for peace.

«Cease praying,» I said to him, «and begin giving thanks.»

«Giving thanks?» he said, surprised.

«Yes, certainly, give thanks for the grace which God already before the foundation of the world provided in Jesus-Christ and revealed at the Cross of Calvary. God has already given in Christ what you are seeking to bring about through your supplication. Believe the Gospel that announces to you this grace. Receive the forgiveness of your sins by faith, and thank God for what He has given you in Christ, but what you or any one else cannot and do not require to bring about by your prayers.»

In this manner I spoke to him, he went home and followed my advice, and when I again met him, all his doubts and fears had gone, and he had found peace through faith in the finished work on the Cross, by which his sins were put away.

He was able then to tell me, with a shining face, that he had found the true ground of assurance.

There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

That was the spirit and life of father V. at home and at his work, which gave him contact with the children of the world.

I could see how much he was in earnest about spiritual things, when one day he told me, with sorrow, that he was still tempted to sin. He thought, this was a proof, that it was not really well with his soul.

It was a great consolation to him when I told him, that every child of God is tempted, and that the Devil troubles them far more than those in his grasp, but that temptation was not sin, for the Lord Jesus Himself was tempted. Yielding to temptation alone is sin, and we must keep guard over our fleshly nature which is ever present with us, and which we must regard as crucified and under the curse, but not yet dead.

When after five years of instruction and shepherding, the first 33 Catholics were received as members and admitted to the communion, father V. and his family were all included.

I am almost 70 years of age, and have yet to make my first communion, he said, in his usual cheerful manner. He was a bright disposition and at times he was witty.

What a pleasure it was to hear the old man in true Flemish language reading aloud the Bible, in his simple dialect, and he read it well, too.

What a pleasure it was to me, after I left Dunkirk, whenever I visited the town again, to meet the good old man.

When he was no longer able to work as hard as he used, and needed to rest more, his son carried on his business which never failed them, after they left the Roman Catholic Church, for if some clients left them, the Lord gave him others.

His son later on, had a great desire to be rather a builder of God's spiritual temple: after quiet deliberation, he finally laid down his stone and trowel and became a colporteur, for the British and Foreign Bible Society.

It was he who once said to me in earlier days:

«Sir, I shall never change my religion.»

A great trial come to the family, when the second daughter was taken from them through death: after a painful sickness, she passed away in full assurance of faith, in peace, and hope.

The father was taken ill in the beginning of the same year. He felt that the end was approaching. Before he took to his bed, he often spoke of going home, and it was plainly evident, that he was fully prepared.

«I shall not be with you much longer,» he said to his wife and children, «but don't trouble about me, for I can say, like Simeon of old: «Lord, now lettest thou they servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.»

And his end was peace. It was remarkable that the very night he passed away, there watched beside him, one of the members of the Flemish congregation, who had been saved as a brand plucked out of the fire, he had been a great drunkard, but was now a faithful, praying Christian.

The sick man shortly before he passed away asked for Psalm 51 to be read to him, for he felt his need of just that penitential psalm; it expressed so clearly his state, a deeply penitent sinner, who did not dare to die or go into eternity, save as relying solely in God's grace.

* * *

As a testimony that the *Colportage work* also in *Dunkirk* and its suburbs goes forward in spirit and power, we give the following striking report of colporteur, August V., the son of the old man, whose history is already given above.

About 30 kilometers from Dunkirk, there is a very big factory, where Belgians are employed: they are also all Flemish. In my colportage work, I found my way to them.

I distributed many tracts amongst them, and offered them God's word, saying: «See, Flemish friends, that is the complete life of Christ and in the Flemish language. You can see in this book how our Lord gave sight to the blind, and caused the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. You can learn how to pray and what faith is. How you can get the forgiveness of your sins.»

I sold all my books in a few minutes.

Two days later I returned for the second time of the factory, and was able to have a good deal of conversation and distribute the tracts, and sell three Bibles and 23 New Testaments.

I also distributed hundreds of «Blyde Boodschap» («The Glad News») amongst them.

I went back not long after the third time, well provided with books, tracts and «Blyde Boodschaps.»

They had hardly caught sight of me when they called out: «So, you have come again?»

The foreman at once came to me and began to reprimand me: «You are a Protestant, a Lutherian, you have sold bad books, the priest has forbidden us to read your books.»

Whilst he thus snapped at me, quite a hundred of the workmen gathered round me.

One called out: «Deceiver, give us back our money.» Another cried: «Let us take his pack from him.» A third added: «Let us throw him in the water.» (The canal was close by.)

They stood thus round me, some with clenched fists, whilst many still called out: «Let us put him in the water, he has deceived us.»

«My friends,» I said, «I am not alone, there are two of us here.»

«What,» they shouted: «Where is the other?»

«Above,» said I, «is God, my Father. He is quite close to me, and none here shall put a hand upon me. I come to bring you God's Word. I do not come to do harm, but good.»

But shouted the foreman: «You, are you not a Lutherian, a Protestant, you are against our Mother, the holy Church, you despise the confessional, and so on.»

«My friend,» I replied, «give me your hand, for I am going to pray for you that the Lord may forgive you for you know He has said: «It must be that offences come, but woe to that man through whom the offences cometh.» Do you not know it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?»

I held his hand and said again: «Yes,» I shall pray for you, for you are very unhappy.

«Why,» he asked, turning as pale as death.

«Because,» I replied, «it is your fault that none buys the books, for you have despised God's Word. Ask God for forgiveness and He will give it to you.»

Then I turned and went away, with tears in my eyes. None touched me. I took no food that night.

Sometime after, I again visited the factory, naturally with fear and trembling.

I then heard that the foreman had been dismissed for stealing his master's coal. The men gave me a good reception. They bought 66 books, many tracts and papers.

I went back again eight days later.

They begged me to come back, after working hours, and speak to them.

I did this gladly. There were from 400 to 500 men assembled in a big shed, who listened with respect to what I told of God's Word. I also sung them some hymns.

I stayed till quite late, not wanting to stop all night.

They found it all so beautiful. Some had tears in their eyes. They bought 18 Bibles, 80 Testaments, 50 Gospels with Acts, and 250 scripture-portions and 500 papers.. I ate and drunk with them, and they shook me friendly by the hand. They called me August, as if I were a brother.

50,000 Belgians work in Winter in France. Pray for me and for all the colporteurs that God will give us wisdom and power to be a blessing to many.

There is also Gospel Work in *Dunkirk among the Sailors,* in different languages, through the distribution of printed papers. They are all welcome at the Home, and many have already witnessed: Here I learned to know the Saviour.

Before and during the war we had for our Evangelical Work in Dunkirk a hired house. Since the war this house has been bought for an English consulate.

This is a great difficulty for our Evangelization in that town.

By the kindness of an English Evangelist, Mr. Mackenzie, we may use his hall for our meetings, but we are greatly in need of a house for our Evangelist and our Mission.

Our little congregation has suffered much by the war, but our members sought and found their consolation and strength

in prayer. Many times a prayer meeting was surprised by a bombardment.

It was also during a bombardment that our Evangelist lost his wife, nine days after the birth of her second child. She died in the cellar, where she had been brought to be more out of danger.

Before she died, she asked her husband: «Sing with me the hymn which in our meetings we sung so often:

When all my labours and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore.
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.
Oh, that will be glory for me,
When by his grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory for me.

Our Evangelization in Dunkirk has been during the war a great blessing for many *soldiers*.

If we made up the sum of all those who have attended our meetings, we should certainly reach the number of 7,000.

May the Lord provide for the need of His own Work, and give us a house for it.

He who says: «*Thou shallt not be forgotten of Me.*»

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John III, 16.

Our Flemish Congregation in Dunkirk.

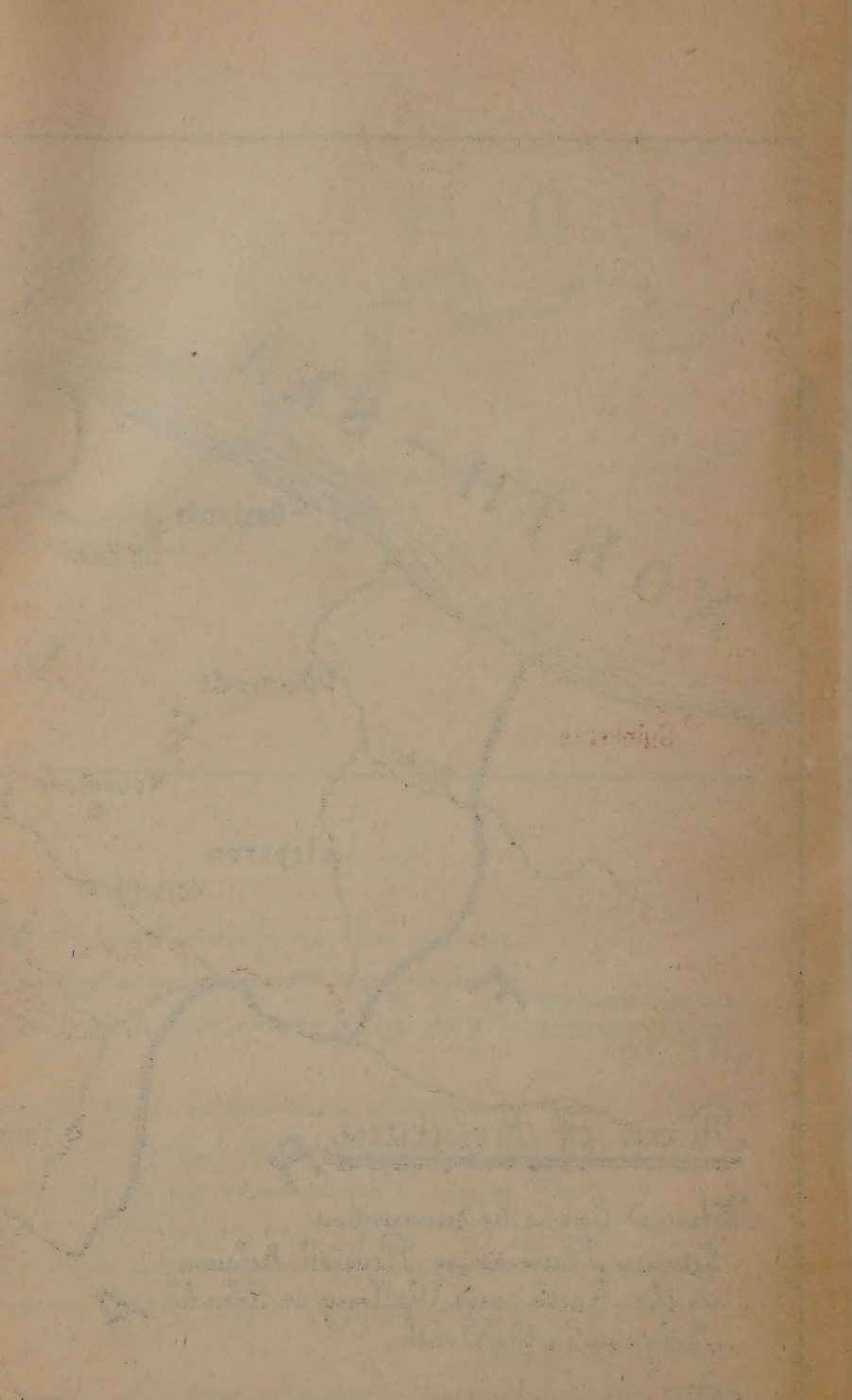
Harvest-time in Flanders, the Last Load.

Map of Belgium.

The red line is the demarcation between Flanders or Flemish Belgium in the North and Wallony or French Belgium in the South.

Flanders. has 1248 towns and villages with a total population of about 4 million inhabitants.
Only in 24 of those localities is there regular preaching of the Gospel; thus more than 1000 are without Gospel preaching.
Our Mission Shiloh, besides its regular work in its 8 stations, (red letter), propagates the Gospel throughout the whole of Flanders bij means of Holy Scriptures, books, papers, open airmeetings at markets and fairs.

Wallony. – has 1354 towns and villages with a total population of about 3 million inhabitants; – in 164 of those localities there is regular Gospel preaching.



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